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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/12/2016

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SUBJECT: WHA/DAS DUDDY'S VISIT TO HAITI, JANUARY 10-11

REF: PAP 29

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Timothy M. Carney for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: WHA/DAS Patrick Duddy during his visit to Port-au-Prince on January 10-11 urged the IGOH, political parties, and UN and OAS officials to hold to the most recent electoral calendar, take action to improve the security environment, and encourage Haitians to participate in the elections. DAS Duddy emphasized to SRS Valdes the international community's firm expectation that MINUSTAH would address insecurity in Cite Soleil. Valdes detailed plans to increase enforcement activities but stated that MINUSTAH would be unable to conduct major operations to disarm and detain gang members before the first round of elections on February 7.

¶2. (C) Summary continued: DAS Duddy assured political party representatives that the US and international community remained committed to Haiti's development, but that successful elections must be the first step in that process. The parties expressed concerns regarding various logistical aspects of elections preparations and highlighted the need for improved security to create more confidence among the population. The PM asked for a public statement from the USG in support of the new electoral calendar. Post reports on DAS Duddy's discussion with the PM regarding the imprisonment of former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune and Gerald Jean-Juste (septel). DAS Duddy's trip highlighted reassuring developments regarding elections preparations, but also made clear that elections authorities still need to undertake an intensive public information campaign, and that MINUSTAH must immediately take steps to improve the security climate. End Summary.

Meeting with MINUSTAH Leadership  
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¶3. (C) In his meeting with SRS Valdes on January 10, DAS Duddy stressed that the international community has given MINUSTAH a vote of confidence in renewing its mandate and urged MINUSTAH to take action in Cite Soleil to merit this endorsement. Valdes responded that MINUSTAH could not undertake a large-scale operation against gangs inside Cite Soleil before the first round of elections. The Jordanian contingent's incapacity guaranteed that widespread civilian

casualties would result, and MINUSTAH still lacks specific intelligence to conduct more targeted operations. Valdes claimed that the Jordanians had been in a difficult situation for too long, had suffered too many casualties, and become frustrated. Rotating in another contingent before February 7 would be "complicated," at best. Instead, he would focus on securing Route National One, the main artery leading to Cite Soleil, and the access points into and out of the area. Valdes added that he also plans to strengthen and increase the number of MINUSTAH/HNP joint patrols throughout Port-au-Prince, requiring increased cooperation among MINUSTAH military and police forces and the HNP. With control of Route National One and Cite Soleil secured by MINUSTAH, Valdes expected that the HNP could then "do something" to act against the gangs, adding that HNP Director Mario Andresol had assisted in developing this plan.

14. (C) Reporting on a recent meeting with Andresol regarding kidnappings, Valdes related that Andresol believes that former Lavalas senator and presidential candidate Dany Toussaint was behind half of the kidnappings in December, which had risen from 69 the previous month to 240. According to Andresol, Toussaint controls a band of former and current policemen who wear police uniforms, communicate by radio, speak English and operate with precision. Thus, Valdes emphasized, the crime problem is not restricted to Cite Soleil.

15. (C) DAS Duddy requested that MINUSTAH provide security for election observers deployed to the more volatile parts of Haiti. Valdes said MINUSTAH forces would be stretched to the limit in securing voting centers, but agreed to re-examine the issue, noting that "observers will be

PORT AU PR 00000111 002 OF 003

necessary to ensure the credibility of the elections.<sup>8</sup> At that moment, however, acting MINUSTAH Force Commander General Aldunate shook his head no, signaling that MINUSTAH security for international observers would not be possible. Valdes, however, acknowledged that protecting observers deployed to difficult areas would have to be considered.

#### Meeting with Political Parties

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16. (C) DAS Duddy met with Victor Benoit, Secretary General of FUSION, Dr. Gerard Blot, secretary general of Tet Ansamn; Chavannes Jean Baptiste, PPM chief and campaign manager for Charles Henri Baker; and Robert Manuel, campaign manager for Rene Preval, at the DCM's dinner January 10. DAS Duddy reassured everyone that the IGOH and the CEP had determined the new electoral calendar; the international community had not imposed the new dates. He went on to characterize the current atmosphere of high-level international attention focused on Haiti as "unprecedented," and stressed that donor countries expect elections to take place on schedule. He urged parties to participate to fully support the process, help ensure that the elections were free and fair, and to behave democratically in accepting the results.

17. (C) All present expressed serious concern about the location of voting centers and the absence of clear communication from election authorities about electoral procedures. Blot related stories of candidates not being able to vote for themselves due to registration mistakes and a lack of voting centers in rural communities. Baptiste highlighted the lack of communication from the government: parties and voters had too little information about the location of voting centers and transport arrangements. Manuel, representing the acknowledged front-runner, called on all the parties to work together and support the process, but agreed with his colleagues that better communication is necessary on the part of the CEP and IGOH. The group expressed serious concern regarding MINUSTAH's failure to take visible actions to reassure voters that security would be in place.

Meeting with PM Gerard Latortue  
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¶18. (C) DAS Duddy opened his January 10 meeting with the PM by congratulating him on the government's announcement of the electoral calendar. Latortue reiterated that his government had chosen the new dates based on the consensus reached by the CEP. He provided DAS Duddy with a copy of the government's official *Moniteur* publication legalizing the new calendar (septel). The PM noted that the Canadians and French had congratulated the government in the press, but that the USG had said nothing publicly. He requested that the Department issue a public statement welcoming and supporting the new calendar. DAS Duddy accepted that a statement would give greater weight to respect for the dates among Haitians and agreed to pass the request to the Department.

¶19. (C) The PM said that he is aware that some political parties and even members of his cabinet are trying to further delay elections because of their opposition to Rene Preval. Latortue stressed that if elections did not take place on February 7 he would resign to spare himself from further international embarrassment. He hoped that election results would be a true reflection of the electorate's will and stated that those who truly want to see democracy in Haiti need to support the current dates rather than interfere with the process on the basis of polling results. Latortue pledged full cooperation in addressing the medical conditions of Yvon Neptune and Gerald Jean-Juste (septel).

Meeting with CEP, UN and OAS Election Officials  
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¶10. (C) DAS Daddy met over lunch on January 11 with UN elections Chief Gerard LeChevallier, OAS Elections Chief Elizabeth Spehar, and CEP Director General Jacques Bernard, lauding their efforts to meet the new deadlines and overcome

PORT AU PR 00000111 003 OF 003

technical obstacles. Bernard stated that his team had nearly completed logistical preparations, and that he would take final decisions in the coming days on issues such as voting centers and transportation. Spehar confirmed that all national ID cards are in the country and that OAS staff had distributed over 2.2 million cards. The OAS would issue cards at distribution centers until January 21, at which point the OAS would transfer cards to BEDs and BECs for further pickup. While the number of registrants seeking IDs had slackened, she expected that the announcement of this deadline and an increased public information campaign would lead to an increase in card distribution.

¶11. (C) Bernard said he would begin holding regular press conferences in the coming days to better inform the public of these and other CEP arrangements, stating that he was best able to provide the kind of detailed information necessary to reassure the public. Asked about key challenges remaining, Spehar suggested that many actors are prepared to challenge the results if they do not approve of the outcome. LeChevallier claimed that there are not enough partisan poll watchers, and suggested that the CEP provide further funding to the parties for this purpose. Bernard questioned whether security arrangements were sufficient, noting that the international community had subjected him to intense scrutiny over logistical preparations, but that he did not see the same attention devoted to security matters. The DCM explained that the international community and the IGOH address security issues in other fora, but noted that the USG continued to press MINUSTAH to take more action to ensure a more stable environment generally, and not focus exclusively on election-day security.

Comment  
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¶12. (C) DAS Duddy's meetings provided reassurance that elections organizers have nearly completed organizational tasks and are on schedule to hold the first round on February ¶7. At the same time, however, the trip highlighted the inadequacy of efforts to inform and reassure both the public and the political parties that elections preparations are on track. Bernard's decision to take on primary responsibility for informing the public is welcome news. Since coming on board in November, Bernard has performed extraordinarily well and will be the best possible spokesperson for the electoral process.

¶13. (C) The continued wave of violence and kidnapping in Port-au-Prince stems principally from criminals exploiting the lawless atmosphere, rather than actors with political motives. Regardless of its root causes, the insecurity is nevertheless sowing uncertainty among the electorate regarding their safety on election day. MINUSTAH and the HNP must immediately take visible measures to establish more control. We agree that current and former police officers are behind many of the kidnappings, though we question the level than can be attributed to Danny Toussaint. In any case, Cite Soleil is the core area from which violence and crime emanate, and we will press Valdes to meet the commitments made to DAS Duddy.

TCARNEY